

UPPER INTERMEDIATE UNIT 2

a letter of complaint

speakout WRITING TIP

When you write a letter of complaint, you need to make sure that it is clear and concise. You need to outline your reason for writing and give a concise description of the problem. You should also propose a solution to the problem or suggest action that needs to be taken and give a suggested time frame. Use formal language and always be polite!

- 1** What are the typical problems that you can have with a neighbour? Make a list.

- 2** Read the letter about a problem between two neighbours and answer the questions.

- 1 What is the problem?
- 2 What action has the dog owner taken?
- 3 What action has Steven Jones taken?
- 4 What solution does Steven Jones propose?

22 Oxbow Close
Little Norton
GL9 65D

5th April
8 Lake Road
Little Norton
GL9 67D

Dear Mr Broadbent,

I am writing with respect to the conversation we had in February concerning your dog, Rocky, and the hole in your garden fence.

As you know I mentioned that your dog is constantly entering my garden and has on a number of occasions uprooted my plants, knocked over my bins and generally caused a nuisance. I further mentioned that it is due to the hole in your fence where our properties meet and you promised me that it would be repaired as soon as possible.

It is now April and still nothing has been done.

I have contacted my lawyer and he has suggested that I try once more to resolve the matter amicably before taking it any further. I am therefore requesting in writing that the fence is repaired so that your dog cannot access my garden or my property.

I would expect this issue to be addressed within two weeks of the date of this letter. If you should wish to discuss the matter further I will be available most evenings next week.

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Yours sincerely,
Steven Jones

- 3** Look at the guidelines for a good letter of complaint at the beginning. Using these guidelines, is this a good letter of complaint? Why?/Why not?

- 4** Match the informal phrases below with formal phrases in the letter.

1 I am using this letter to ask ...

2 I've been in touch with ...

3 If you want to talk to me ...

4 This letter is about ...

5 ... find a friendly solution ...

6 Thanks for dealing with this problem quickly.

7 Best wishes

- 5** What are the formal equivalents of the informal words and phrases below?

1 fixed _____

2 dealt with _____

3 talk (n) _____

4 coming into _____

5 free _____

6 houses and gardens _____

- 6** Write a letter (120–180 words) to your local council complaining about the noise and mess that the local rubbish collectors make every week outside your house.

Plan your writing

- Think about the content of your letter. Why are you contacting the council? Give detailed information about the problem and indicate what you expect to happen next.
- Give a time frame for action and your contact details.
- Remember to use formal language.

Check your writing

- Have you used appropriate formal language?
- Have you checked your grammar and spelling?
- Did you find any mistakes?